

1 SEMICONDUCTOR PHOTODETECTOR WITH
2 INTERNAL REFLECTOR

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4 RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 **[0001]** This application claims benefit of U.S. provisional App. No. 60/417,805 entitled
6 "Semiconductor photodetector with internal reflector" filed 10/10/2002 in the names of
7 Henry A. Blauvelt, David W. Vernooy, and Hao Lee, said provisional application being
8 hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The field of the present invention relates to semiconductor photodetectors. In particular, a semiconductor photodetector is described herein that includes an internal reflector.

[0003] Figs. 1A and 1B illustrate a generic configuration including a planar waveguide 120 on a waveguide substrate 101. A surface-mounted photodetector 110 is placed on the waveguide substrate 101 (either directly, or on alignment/support members thereon) for detecting optical power propagating from an output face of waveguide 120. Figs. 1C and 1D illustrate another generic configuration including an optical fiber 150 received in an alignment groove 152 for illuminating a photodetector 110 (surface-mounted on the groove substrate 151, as in Figs. 1C and 1D, or fabricated directly on the groove substrate). Reasons for using a photodetector in such circumstances are numerous. For example, the optical power propagating through waveguide 120 or fiber 150 may comprise an optical telecommunications signal modulated at high data rates (10 or more Gbits/sec, for example), and a high-speed photodetector 110 may be employed as a receiver for converting the optical signal into an electronic signal. In another example, the optical power propagating through waveguide 120 or fiber 150 may comprise a portion of the output of a semiconductor laser or other light source split from the main optical output for monitoring purposes. The resulting signal from the photodetector may be used for signal normalization, as a feedback control signal for stabilizing the operation of the light source, and/or for other purposes. In this type of application a high-speed photodetector may or may not be required. Many other circumstances may be envisioned wherein detection of optical power propagating through an optical waveguide or an optical fiber may be useful.

[0004] Silicon is a commonly-used planar waveguide substrate, typically provided with a silica buffer layer and one or more silica-based planar waveguides fabricated on the silica buffer layer (so-called Planar Waveguide Circuits, or PLCs). Such substrate may also be readily provided with grooves for receiving an end of an optical fiber. It is often the case (in telecommunications devices) that the wavelength of the optical power carried by waveguide 120 or fiber 150 lies in the 1.3 μm to 1.6 μm region, for which

1 silicon-based photodetectors are not suitable. Photodetectors based on III-V
2 semiconductors are suitable for this wavelength region, but the materials are not
3 compatible for fabrication of the photodetector directly on a silicon or silica surface.
4 Even if waveguide substrate and detector materials are compatible, it may nevertheless
5 be desirable for providing the semiconductor photodetector as a separate component
6 for later assembly for other reasons (incompatible processing steps, design flexibility,
7 customization of waveguide and/or photodetector, and so forth). A separately
8 fabricated semiconductor photodetector 110 (III-V or otherwise) is therefore often
9 assembled onto substrate 101 or 151 (silicon or otherwise) and aligned for receiving
10 and detecting at least a portion of the optical power propagating through waveguide 120
11 or fiber 150. The present disclosure addresses suitable fabrication and/or adaptation of
12 semiconductor 110 for enabling and/or facilitating such assembly.

13 **[0005]** For mounting on a substantially planar substrate 101 or 151, it is advantageous
14 for photodetector 110 to also be fabricated/mounted on its own substantially planar
15 substrate. The light to be detected propagates substantially parallel to these planar
16 substrates. However, the layers that form the photodetector active region on the
17 substrate are also substantially parallel to the substrates, rendering absorption and
18 detection of the light by the photodetector problematic in many cases. Redirection of
19 the light out of a plane parallel to the substrates facilitates detection thereof. A
20 photodetector implemented according to the present disclosure employs internal
21 reflection from an angled face of the photodetector substrate for directing the light
22 toward the active region thereof.

SUMMARY

[0006] A photodetector comprises a photodetector substrate with angled entrance and reflecting faces formed at the substrate upper surface. The reflecting face forms an acute angle with the substrate upper surface and is positioned relative to the entrance face so that at least a portion of an optical beam transmitted through the entrance face into the substrate is internally reflected from the reflecting face toward the substrate upper surface. A photodetector active region is formed at the substrate upper surface and is positioned so that at least a portion of the optical beam reflected from the reflecting face impinges on at least a portion of the active region.

[0007] Large numbers of photodetectors thus formed may be fabricated simultaneously using wafer-scale spatially-selective material processing techniques, which may be implemented by processing only a single wafer surface. Once fabricated (and separated from other photodetectors on the wafer, if wafer-scale processing is employed), a photodetector may be inverted and mounted on a planar waveguide substrate for receiving an optical beam emerging from the end of a planar waveguide formed on the waveguide substrate. At least a portion of the optical beam may enter through the entrance face, reflect from the reflecting face, and impinge on the active region. In this way a photodetector may be readily integrated into a composite optical device assembled on the planar waveguide substrate. Alternatively, the photodetector substrate may be provided with a fiber alignment groove, or may be positioned on a second substrate having a fiber alignment groove, so that light emerging from an end face of an optical fiber positioned in the groove may enter through the entrance face, reflect from the reflecting face, and impinge on the active region.

[0008] Objects and advantages pertaining to a semiconductor photodetector with an internal reflector may become apparent upon referring to the disclosed exemplary embodiments as illustrated in the drawings and set forth in the following written description and/or claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] Figs. 1A and 1B are schematic diagrams of a photodetector mounted on a planar waveguide substrate.

[0010] Figs. 1C and 1D are schematic diagrams of a photodetector mounted on a grooved substrate with an optical fiber.

[0011] Figs. 2A and 2B are side cross-sectional and top views, respectively, of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0012] Figs. 3A and 3B are side cross-sectional and top views, respectively, of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0013] Fig. 4 is a side view of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0014] Figs. 5A and 5B are side and top views, respectively, illustrating a process sequence for fabricating a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0015] Figs. 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D illustrate a process step for fabricating a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0016] Figs. 7A and 7B are side and top views, respectively, of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0017] Fig. 8 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a planar waveguide substrate.

[0018] Figs. 9A and 9B are side and top views, respectively, of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0019] Fig. 10 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a planar waveguide substrate.

[0020] Figs. 11A and 11B are side and top views, respectively, of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

[0021] Fig. 12 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a planar waveguide substrate.

1 **[0022]** Fig. 13 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a
2 planar waveguide substrate.

3 **[0023]** Fig. 14 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a
4 grooved substrate with an optical fiber.

5 **[0024]** Fig. 15 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a
6 planar waveguide substrate.

7 **[0025]** Fig. 16 illustrates mounting of a photodetector with an internal reflector onto a
8 grooved substrate with an optical fiber.

9 **[0026]** Fig. 17 is a top view of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

10 **[0027]** Fig. 18 is a top view of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

11 **[0028]** Fig. 19 is a top view of a photodetector with an internal reflector.

12 **[0029]** It should be noted that the relative proportions of various structures shown in
13 the Figures may be distorted to more clearly illustrate exemplary embodiments.

14 Relative dimensions of various optical devices, optical waveguides, optical components,
15 alignment/support members, electrodes/contacts, and so forth may be distorted, both
16 relative to each other as well as in their relative transverse and/or longitudinal
17 proportions. In many of the Figures the transverse dimension of an optical element is
18 enlarged relative to the longitudinal dimension for clarity, which will cause variations of
19 transverse dimension(s) with longitudinal position to appear exaggerated. Thicknesses
20 of various layers may also be exaggerated.

21 **[0030]** The embodiments shown in the Figures are exemplary, and should not be
22 construed as limiting the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0031] An exemplary photodetector with an internal reflector is shown in Figs. 2A and 2B. A semiconductor substrate 302 is spatially-selectively processed to form adjacent substrate upper surface areas 301 and 303 at differing heights and separated by an entrance face 304. A reflecting face 306 is formed at the substrate upper surface (bordering area 303) by spatially-selective processing. An n-type semiconductor layer 310 (i.e., an n-layer), an intrinsic semiconductor layer 312 (i.e., an i-layer), and another n-layer 314 are formed at the substrate upper surface area 303. Exemplary materials for producing a III-V semiconductor photodetector are semi-insulating InP or n-type InP for the substrate 302, n-type InP for the n-layers 310 and 314, and InGaAs for i-layer 312. The upper n-layer may be spatially-selectively doped to produce a p-type area 316 (i.e., a p-layer). Alternatively, a p-layer layer may be initially present (instead of n-layer 314) and spatially-selectively etched to form p-layer area 316 (as shown in Figs. 3A and 3B). Layers 310, 312, and 316 form a p-i-n junction that functions as the photodetector active region. Metal contact layers may be applied, for example contact 310a formed on an exposed portion of n-layer 310, and contact 316a formed on p-layer 316, thereby providing co-sided contacts to the p-i-n photodetector. Alternatively, an n-type substrate may be employed, and contact 310 applied to the opposite side of the substrate 302. Incident optical power may enter the substrate through entrance face 304 and propagate through a portion of substrate 302, and at least a portion of the incident optical power may be internally reflected from reflecting face 306 to impinge on at least a portion of the photodetector active region, generating an electronic signal.

[0032] Any suitable type of photodetector active area may be formed while remaining within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended claims. Examples may include but are not limited to p-i-n photodiodes (photoconductive or photovoltaic), avalanche photodiodes, Schottky diodes, phototransistors, metal-semiconductor-metal (MSM) photodetectors, combinations thereof, and/or functional equivalents thereof. Any suitable semiconductor material or material combinations may be employed while remaining within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended claims. Examples may include, but are not limited to: silicon and/or silicon-based semiconductors; germanium and/or germanium-based semiconductors; III-V

1 semiconductors and/or alloys thereof; n-doped and/or p-doped variants thereof;
2 combinations thereof; and/or functional equivalents thereof.

3 **[0033]** The entrance face 304 may form an angle varying over a wide range depending
4 on the desired optical configuration for the photodetector. Many useful optical
5 configurations may be implemented with an angle α between about 60° and about 120°,
6 and typical configurations may employ an angle α between about 85° and about 110°.
7 Angles between about 85° and about 110° between the entrance face 304 and the
8 substrate upper surface areas 301 and 303 yield incidence angles from about 5°
9 (reflecting face surface normal below horizontal) through 0° (normal incidence) to about
10 20° (reflecting face surface normal above horizontal), for light propagating substantially
11 parallel to the adjacent substrate surface areas 301 and 303. Other incident
12 propagation directions may be accommodated while remaining within the scope of the
13 present disclosure and/or appended claims. The entrance face may be formed by a dry
14 etch process (such as reactive ion etching) that enables control of the vertical angle and
15 horizontal orientation of the resulting etched face. Other etch processes allowing the
16 angle to be chosen may be employed, or it may be possible for a given substrate
17 material and crystal orientation to make use of etching along crystal planes in the
18 material to achieve the desired entrance face angle. A saw cut or other mechanical
19 material processing techniques could instead be employed for forming entrance face
20 304. Regardless of the processing employed for forming entrance face 304, in some
21 cases subsequent processing may result in absence of substrate upper surface area
22 301 from the finished photodetector, while in other cases the finished photodetector
23 may include at least a portion of substrate upper surface area 301. An entrance face
24 304 oriented along a crystal plane may alternatively be formed by cleaving the
25 substrate, which would also eliminate substrate surface area 301 from the finished
26 photodetector.

27 **[0034]** For an InP substrate ($n \approx 3.2$) in air and an incident beam propagating
28 substantially parallel to substrate surface areas 301 and 303, the stated range of
29 entrance face orientations leads to a range of refracted angles from about 2° above
30 horizontal through 0° to about 14° below horizontal. For refraction below horizontal, the
31 refracted beam directed deeper into the substrate, away from the adjacent substrate

1 upper surface area 303 and away from the photodetector active region (active region
2 labeled 318 in Fig. 4). For an InP substrate embedded in a typical transparent "potting"
3 or encapsulating medium ($n \approx 1.4$ -1.5, for example), the refracted optical beam forms an
4 angle ranging between about 2.3° above horizontal and about 11° below horizontal.
5 The entrance face 304 may be antireflection coated to decrease reflective losses and/or
6 reduce optical feedback to upstream optical devices or components (about 27%
7 reflection at an uncoated InP/air interface; about 14% at an uncoated InP/encapsulant
8 interface). Non-normal incidence at entrance face 304 may also serve to reduce optical
9 feedback to upstream optical devices or components arising from reflection from the
10 entrance face. If the photodetector is to be used in a multi-wavelength optical system or
11 assembly, a wavelength-selective filter coating of any suitable type may be formed on
12 the entrance face, such as a long-pass, short-pass, bandpass, or notch filter.

13 **[0035]** Reflecting face 306 may be formed by a spatially-selective etch process. A wet
14 etch process may be employed for forming reflecting face 306, which forms along a
15 crystal plane of the substrate material. For InP (crystallographic 100 surface
16 substantially parallel to the substrate surface), the reflecting face 306 forms at an angle
17 between about 51° and about 60° (usually about 55°) with the substrate surface (angle
18 β of Fig. 4), so that an optical beam refracted at entrance face 304 (as described above)
19 and propagating within the substrate may be internally reflected upward toward the
20 photodetector active region 318 at the substrate surface. For other crystal orientations
21 and/or other substrate materials, reflecting face 306 may form along a crystal plane at
22 another angle. Use of a crystal plane for defining reflecting face 306 results in a
23 reproducible face orientation and a reflecting surface of high optical quality.
24 Alternatively, reflecting face 306 may be formed by any other suitable spatially-selective
25 etch process(es), including dry etch processes, that form the reflecting face at an angle
26 determined by the crystallographic structure of the substrate, or that may form the
27 reflecting face at any desired angle. A saw cut or other mechanical material processing
28 techniques could instead be employed for forming reflecting face 306. The angle
29 between reflecting face 306 and the substrate upper surface area 303 may typically
30 range between about 40° and about 70° , may more typically range between about 45°

1 and about 65°, and may range between about 51° and about 60° for many common
2 photodetector implementations.

3 **[0036]** Dimensions for a photodiode with an internal reflector may be subject to a
4 variety of practical constraints. The following are exemplary dimensions that may be
5 used for implementing an InP-based photodetector with an internal reflector, but should
6 not be interpreted as limiting the scope of inventive concepts disclosed and/or claimed
7 herein. A primary constraint is the minimum distance between an edge of the
8 photodetector active region 318 and the edge of the etched reflecting face 306
9 (dimension A in Fig. 4). Performance of the photodetector may degrade if the
10 photodetector active region is too close to the etched edge (less than about 5-7 μm
11 away for a p-i-n photodetector on InP; this may depend on material quality and/or
12 processing quality control), with such detectors potentially exhibiting poor reliability
13 and/or high dark currents. For a substantial portion of the optical beam to reach the
14 photodetector active region at this position (i.e., at least 5-7 μm away from the reflector
15 edge), an upper portion of the optical beam should reflect from reflecting face 306 at a
16 depth greater than a minimum depth within photodiode substrate 302. This minimum
17 depth also depends on the angle of the reflecting face. For InP with a reflecting face
18 between about 51° and about 60°, the depth of an upper portion of the reflected optical
19 beam may typically be greater than about 5-7 μm . To accommodate this distance and
20 typical beam sizes/divergences encountered (see below), the overall etch depth for
21 reflecting face 306 (dimension B in Fig. 4) should in most cases be greater than about
22 10 μm , and is typically between about 30 μm and about 50 μm . The size and/or
23 position of the incident optical beam may force this minimum etch depth to be made
24 larger. There may also be a practical upper limit for this etch depth, however. The InP
25 photodetector substrate 302 may typically be thin (perhaps as thin as about 150 μm or
26 less). The depth of the reflecting face etch should not be too large a fraction of this
27 overall thickness, so as to avoid excessive weakening of the substrate, and potential
28 device failure. Larger etch depths may also require larger areas of the substrate to be
29 masked, decreasing the density of devices that may be fabricated on a single substrate
30 wafer. The etch depth of a wet etch may typically be controlled by etchant
31 concentration and etch time, although other techniques may be employed (see below)

1 for controlling the depth of wet etch, dry etch, or other processes used for providing
2 reflecting face 306.

3 **[0037]** On the input side, the entrance face 304 should be etched at least deeply
4 enough below the level of photodetector active area 318 (dimension C in Fig. 4) to
5 accommodate (both in terms of size and position) an optical mode transmitted through
6 the entrance face 304. An optical mode supported by a planar waveguide with a
7 relatively small and/or transversely asymmetric core may be only a few μm across upon
8 exiting the waveguide and exhibit correspondingly large beam divergence. The fraction
9 of such a divergent optical beam entering entrance face 304 may therefore be limited
10 unless the entrance face is sufficiently close to the waveguide end face or sufficiently
11 large to accommodate the divergent optical beam farther from the waveguide end face.
12 Alternatively, a larger and correspondingly less divergent optical mode may emerge
13 from the end of a planar waveguide or an optical fiber; such larger modes do not
14 typically exceed about 10 μm in transverse extent. The entrance face in this instance
15 should be sufficiently large to accommodate the optical mode, which may not vary much
16 over the distance between the waveguide end face and entrance face 304. The depth
17 of the entrance face 304 may be limited by the etching processes employed and/or by
18 geometric constraints of the planar waveguide substrate (for example if the entrance
19 face must be positioned facing the end of the planar waveguide while contacts on the
20 photodetector make contact with the waveguide substrate). A minimum etch depth for
21 forming the entrance face 304 may be about 5 μm (suitable for a small optical mode
22 emerging from a waveguide close to the entrance face, for example), while more typical
23 photodetectors may be fabricated with the entrance face etched to a depth between
24 about 30 μm and about 50 μm . An optical beam transmitted through the entrance face
25 304 (once the photodetector has been mounted on a second substrate with a planar
26 waveguide or fiber) is typically centered on the entrance face between about 2.5 μm
27 and about 50 μm below the level of active area 318, often between about 10 μm and
28 about 20 μm below the level of the active area. Other etch depths for the entrance face
29 and other positions for the transmitted optical beam on the entrance face may be
30 employed while remaining within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended
31 claims. It should be noted that the upper edge of the entrance face may or may not

1 coincide with the level of the active area in the finished photodetector, depending on the
2 particular spatially selective material processing employed to form the entrance face,
3 reflecting face, and active area.

4 **[0038]** The angle of the entrance face 304 (angles α in Fig. 4), the distance along the
5 substrate upper surface between the upper edges of entrance face 304 and reflecting
6 face 306 (dimension D in Fig. 4), and the angle of the reflecting face (angle β in Fig. 4)
7 together determine the position on reflecting face 306 from which the optical beam is
8 reflected. The angle α of entrance face 304 for an exemplary photodetector may range
9 between about 95° and about 99°, resulting in an angle of incidence on the reflecting
10 face between about 29° and about 33° for a reflecting face angle β of about 55°. These
11 incident angles are above the critical angle for total internal reflection (about 18° for an
12 air/InP interface; about 27° for an encapsulant/InP interface), and result in a depth
13 change at reflecting face 306 of about 5%-10% of the face-to-face distance. To achieve
14 a minimum depth of at least 5-7 μm at the reflecting face (as discussed above), an
15 optical beam may be transmitted through the entrance face at a depth greater than or
16 equal to about 5-7 μm , or a smaller entrance face depth may be accommodated by a
17 sufficiently large face-to-face distance. Larger entrance face depth and/or larger face-
18 to-face distances result in greater reflecting face depth. There may be an upper limit on
19 the entrance face depth (as described above), and there may be an upper limit on the
20 face-to-face distance (less than about 250 μm , for example) by the divergence of the
21 optical beam, the sensitivity/speed demands placed on the photodetector, size
22 constraints on the photodetector, and any processing limits on the etch depth for
23 reflecting face 306 (discussed above). Many typical photodetectors may have a face-to-
24 face distance between about 50 μm and about 250 μm ; distances outside this range
25 may nevertheless fall within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended
26 claims.

27 **[0039]** Smaller face-to-face distances may be required when detection efficiency is at a
28 premium. Such may be the case: when the optical beam is more divergent; when the
29 incident optical signal power is small; when a high-speed [10 Gbit/sec or more], and
30 therefore smaller area, photodetector is called for; and so forth. A smaller face-to-face
31 distance results in a larger fraction of the optical beam impinging on the active region of

1 the photodetector, improving overall detection efficiency of the photodetector. In
2 applications where detection efficiency may not be so critical (less divergent beam, low-
3 speed detection, larger active area, large optical signal power, etc), larger face-to-face
4 distance may be employed, potentially relaxing fabrication tolerances and/or improving
5 device yields (for example, if the active photodetector region 318 need not be quite so
6 close to etched reflecting face 306).

7 **[0040]** An exemplary photodetector may comprise an InP substrate with a p-i-n active
8 area, with an active area about 15 μm wide and about 24 μm long, with about a 12 μm
9 gap between the active area and the reflecting face edge. The reflecting face angle (β)
10 may be about 55°, and the face-to-face distance is about 100 μm . The entrance face
11 angle (α) may range between about 95° and about 99°, and the entrance face depth
12 (between the active area level and the center of an optical beam transmitted through the
13 entrance face) may be about 13.5 μm for an non-encapsulated photodetector, or about
14 15.5 μm for an encapsulated photodetector. The corresponding reflecting face depth
15 (between the active region level and the center of the internally-reflected optical beam)
16 may be about 18 μm for a non-encapsulated photodetector and about 20 μm for an
17 encapsulated photodetector.

18 **[0041]** It should be noted that various processing steps or sequences may not produce
19 a sharp or well-defined edge or angle between the substrate upper surface and
20 entrance face 304 or reflecting face 306. In some cases the edges may be
21 unintentionally rounded or curved, or protruding or overhanging material may be left at
22 the edge, a protruding "foot" may be left at the base of an etched face, and/or other
23 irregularities may be left after processing. In other cases one or both of the faces may
24 not meet the substrate upper surface by design. The angles between surfaces and
25 faces referred to herein shall be angles between those portions of the surface or face
26 where the intended geometry has been achieved (e.g., substantially flat portions of a flat
27 entrance face), regardless of whether the surfaces and faces actually meet. Similarly,
28 the face-to-face distances referred to hereinabove shall be measured between locations
29 where the intended surfaces or faces would have met in the absence of irregularities at
30 the edges or processing that eliminated the edges.

1 **[0042]** It should be noted that while total internal reflection from reflecting face 306 is
2 desirable for increasing the overall detection efficiency of the photodetector and
3 reducing polarization-dependence of the face reflectivity, angles below the critical angle,
4 and therefore resulting in only partial, polarization-dependent internal reflection, may
5 nevertheless fall within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended claims. In
6 instances where absolute collection efficiency may not be a critical issue, a
7 photodetector with an internal reflector may be implemented with only partial internal
8 reflection from reflecting face 306. In addition, divergent optical beams propagating
9 within the photodetector and reflected from the reflecting face may undergo total internal
10 reflection over only a portion of the divergent beam if the range of incident angles
11 straddles the critical angle. Portions of extremely divergent input optical beams may
12 even impinge directly on the photodetector active area, without undergoing internal
13 reflection. A reflective coating of any suitable type may be formed on reflecting face
14 306 to enhance internal reflection therefrom at any desired angle of incidence, at the
15 expense of extra processing steps for applying the coating. Examples of such reflective
16 coatings may include metal reflector coatings and multi-layer dielectric reflector
17 coatings.

18 **[0043]** A photodetector with an internal reflector may be fabricated by the following
19 exemplary sequence of spatially selective process steps (side view in Fig. 5A, top view
20 in Fig. 5B). Substrate 302 may comprise semi-insulating InP, layers 310 and 314 may
21 comprise n-type InP, and layer 312 may comprise a layer of semi-insulating or lightly
22 doped InGaAs. Masked diffusion of a p-type dopant may be employed to form p-type
23 area 316, which may then be provided with a metal contact layer 316a. While
24 protecting contact 316a and p-type area 316, a portion of n-type layer 314 and layer 312
25 may be removed and a metal contact 310a may be deposited on an exposed portion of
26 n-type layer 310. Electrical access is thus provided for both p-type and n-type layers
27 310 and 316, which with intervening layer 312 form a p-i-n photodetector active region.
28 Metal electrical traces 310b and 316b may be deposited for enabling electrical access
29 to contacts 310a and 316a, respectively. Masked dry etching may be employed for
30 forming entrance face 304 at the desired angle, and masked wet etching may be
31 employed for providing the reflecting face 306 (each while protecting contacts and

traces, if formed before etching of entrance and/or reflecting faces). All processing steps for forming the photodetector as well as the entrance and reflecting faces may be performed on a single semiconductor substrate surface, eliminating a need for processing both semiconductor surfaces and thereby significantly reducing processing complexity and expense. The exemplary processing sequence also yields a photodetector having co-sided contacts, which may be advantageous in some instances. The process sequence may be implemented on a wafer-scale substrate for many photodiodes simultaneously. Once the processing steps are completed, the wafer may be divided into separate devices for deployment and use. Many other material combinations, layer thicknesses, and/or processing sequences may be devised and employed for fabricating a photodetector active region of any suitable type that nevertheless falls within the scope of inventive concepts disclosed and/or claimed herein.

[0044] In order to reproducibly achieve proper positioning of a wet-etched reflecting face 306, care must be taken that the etching process does not undercut the mask used to define the edge of the reflecting face at the surface of the substrate. Only if there is little or no undercutting of the mask by the etch process will the reflecting face end up in the intended position with high optical quality substantially all the way up to the substrate surface. If the mask does not adhere sufficiently well to the substrate and undercutting occurs, the reflecting face will end up too close to entrance face 304 and the photodiode active region (Dimensions C and D from Fig. 4 too small). This may spoil the geometry of the optical path within the photodetector substrate and decrease the fraction of incident light that reached the photodetector active region. Insufficient distance between the photodetector active region and the etched edge of reflecting face 306 may degrade the performance of the photodetector. In the particular example of Figs. 2A/2B, 3A/B, and 5A/5B, the properties of the materials employed may be exploited for mitigating this potential fabrication problem. The starting material for the processing sequence may typically include an InP substrate with n- and/or p-doped InP layers 310 and 314 with an InGaAs intrinsic layer 312 therebetween. These layers are typically epitaxially grown and are in intimate, atomic level contact with one another (interface typically one or only a few monolayers thick). The InGaAs layer therefore

1 may function as an ideal mask material for a wet etch to provide reflecting surface 306.
2 Layers 310/314 and InGaAs layer 312 may be spatially selectively removed from the
3 substrate along a boundary corresponding to the desired upper edge of reflecting face
4 306. The InGaAs layer is impervious to the etch and protects and constrains the upper
5 edge of the reflecting face as the InP substrate is etched along a crystallographic plane.
6 The specific examples of substrate, etchant, and mask material(s) are exemplary. Any
7 mask that suitably adheres to the substrate material, and any etchant that exhibits the
8 desired crystal plane selectivity, may be equivalently employed.

9 **[0045]** If a spatially selective wet etch is employed that etches selectively along two
10 crystallographic planes, then the dimensions of a de-masked area may be used to
11 determine the size (including the depth) of the wet etch. For example, In Fig. 6A a
12 rectangular area 620 is de-masked. An etchant is used that selectively etches along
13 two different crystallographic planes of substrate 602 (for example, aqueous
14 HBr/H₃PO₄ applied to an InP (100) surface selectively etches along the (111a) and
15 (111b) crystal planes; other etchant/crystal combinations may similarly exhibit such dual
16 selectivity). Figs. 6B, 6C, and 6D show the results of the doubly selective etch process.
17 A tetrahedral cavity is etched into the substrate 602 with surfaces 606a and 606b
18 inclined under the substrate surface and each therefore able to serve as an internal
19 reflecting face of a photodetector. Surfaces 607a and 607b slope toward each other,
20 and when they meet the etch process terminates (regardless of continued exposure to
21 the etchant). The overall depth of the etch process and the precise position and
22 dimensions of the reflecting faces are therefore determined only by the initial
23 dimensions and position of de-masked area 620, which may be determined accurately
24 and precisely. The specific examples of substrate, etchant, and mask material(s) are
25 exemplary. Any mask that suitably adheres to the substrate material, and any etchant
26 that exhibits the desired crystal plane selectivity, may be equivalently employed.

27 **[0046]** Entrance face 304 and/or reflecting face 306 may be suitably curved (in one or
28 both dimensions) for reducing the divergence of an incident optical beam. Entrance
29 face 304 may be readily provided with a lateral curvature (as in Fig. 7A) to form a
30 convex refracting surface by suitable alteration of whatever spatially-selective etch
31 process is employed for its formation. For example, if formed by a masked etching

1 process, suitable modification of the mask may provide the desired lateral curvature for
2 entrance face 304. Providing a vertical curvature for entrance face 304 may pose a
3 more challenging fabrication problem, but may nevertheless be employed for reducing
4 the divergence of an incident optical beam in the vertical dimension (as in Fig. 7B).
5 Techniques such as gray-scale lithography, for example, may yield a desirable vertical
6 curvature for forming a convex refracting surface for entrance face 304. A suitably
7 curved surface may be provided in a similar manner for reflecting face 306, forming a
8 concave internal reflection surface for reducing the divergence of an optical beam
9 propagating from entrance face 304. Providing lateral curvature for reflecting face 306
10 may be readily achieved by suitable adaptation of the relevant spatially selective
11 processing steps (altering a mask, for example), while providing vertical curvature may
12 be more problematic (particularly since reflecting face 306 is recessed relative to the
13 surface of the substrate). Use of an etching process restricted to crystallographic
14 surfaces would not be suitable for providing a curved reflecting face 306. Use of
15 laterally and/or vertically curved entrance and/or reflecting faces may reduce the
16 divergence of an incident optical beam; may increase the fraction of an incident beam
17 that impinges on the photodetector active area; may enable use of longer face-to-face
18 distances; may enable use of smaller, faster, and/or less efficient photodetectors; may
19 loosen alignment tolerances between the photodetector and the optical waveguide or
20 fiber providing the incident optical beam.

21 **[0047]** Once fabricated and separated from other photodetectors on the wafer, a
22 photodiode fabricated with an internal reflector may be inverted and mounted for
23 receiving light emitted from the end of a planar waveguide on a substrate (i.e., "flip-chip"
24 mounted onto a PLC waveguide, as in the example of Fig. 8). The substrate 501 may
25 be provided, if necessary, with a pocket or depression for accommodating any portion of
26 the photodetector that may extend below the level of the planar waveguide 520. A
27 planar waveguide 520 on waveguide substrate 501 is adapted at the end thereof for
28 emitting light propagating therethrough. The emerging optical beam diverges as it
29 propagates from the end of the waveguide according to the mode size supported by the
30 waveguide. The output end of the waveguide may be adapted for mode expansion so
31 as to decrease the divergence of the output beam. The optical beam 513 may

1 propagate substantially parallel to the waveguide substrate and enter the photodetector
2 through entrance face 504. After refraction at the entrance face 504, the beam is
3 redirected to propagate deeper into the photodetector substrate 502 (upward in Fig. 8,
4 since the photodetector is inverted). The optical beam is internally reflected from
5 reflecting face 506 and directed toward photodetector active region 510.

6 **[0048]** Not shown in the Figures are alignment/support structures that may be
7 fabricated on waveguide substrate 501 and/or photodiode substrate 502 for facilitating
8 proper placement of the photodetector in waveguide substrate 501 substantially aligned
9 with the end of waveguide 520 (so that an optical beam emerging from the waveguide
10 illuminates at least a portion of the photodetector active area). Such support/alignment
11 structures may include grooves, flanges, posts, tabs, slots, yokes, solder/metal surface
12 tension, and the like for guiding placement of the photodetector on the waveguide
13 substrate. Waveguide substrate 501 may be provided with electrodes, contacts, and/or
14 electrical traces for establishing electrical connections to the photodetector (omitted
15 from the Figures for clarity). Contacts may be incorporated into support/alignment
16 structures, or may comprise separate structures. Solder or other material employed for
17 forming electrical connections between contacts on the photodetector and mating
18 contacts on the waveguide substrate may also serve to mechanically bond the
19 photodetector to the substrate. Alternatively, the photodetector may be mechanically
20 bonded to the waveguide substrate by a suitable adhesive.

21 **[0049]** A substantially transparent embedding medium or encapsulant 1500 may
22 substantially fill the optical path between the end of planar waveguide 520 and entrance
23 face 504 of the photodetector (Fig. 15). Such a substantially transparent embedding
24 medium may serve to reduce unwanted reflection from the end face of the planar
25 waveguide and from photodetector entrance face 504. The embedding medium may
26 have a refractive index near the refractive index of one of the photodetector and planar
27 waveguide, or between them. Any suitable embedding medium or encapsulant
28 (substantially transparent over a desired operating wavelength range) may be employed
29 that reduces reflection at the waveguide end face and photodetector entrance face
30 relative to vacuum or ambient air. The embedding medium 1500 may be spatially-
31 selectively applied between the waveguide end face and photodetector entrance face,

1 or may instead serve to encapsulate the photodetector and the adjacent end portion of
2 the planar waveguide, as in Fig. 15. Encapsulation of internal reflecting face 506
3 increases the critical angle for total internal reflection, which, if total internal reflection is
4 desired for the photodetector, may impose tighter ranges and/or tolerances for angular
5 and linear dimensions of the photodetector, and may also impose tighter ranges and/or
6 tolerances for size and divergence of an incident optical beam.

7 **[0050]** Fig. 14 shows an exemplary photodetector fabricated according to the present
8 disclosure, including detector substrate 1402, entrance face 1404, internal reflector face
9 1406, and photodetector active region 1418, mounted on a grooved substrate 1401
10 (support/alignment structures omitted for clarity). Groove 1452 is adapted for receiving
11 an optical fiber 1450. This exemplary assembly is similar to that of Fig. 8, with the
12 planar waveguide replaced by an optical fiber. Substrate 1401 is provided with
13 support/alignment structures (not shown) suitably positioned so that a substantial
14 portion of an optical beam 1413 emerging from optical fiber 1450 (when positioned in
15 groove 1452) enters entrance face 1404, reflects from reflecting face 1406, and
16 impinges on active region 1418. The substrate 1401 may include: a pocket or recess
17 for accommodating downward-protruding portions of the photodetector upon mounting;
18 electrical contacts or traces; and/or support/alignment structures for mounting the
19 photodetector on the substrate. The optical path between the end of the fiber 1450 and
20 photodetector entrance face 1404 may be filled with substantially transparent
21 embedding medium or encapsulant 1600 (as described hereinabove), or the
22 photodetector and adjacent end portion of the fiber may be encapsulated by
23 encapsulant 1600 (Fig. 16). In another exemplary embodiment (not shown), a groove is
24 formed directly on the detector substrate 1402 and an optical fiber is mounted therein.
25 Such an embodiment may function in a manner similar Figs. 14 and 16, without the use
26 of a second substrate for separate mounting of the photodetector and fiber.

27 **[0051]** Another exemplary embodiment of a photodetector with an internal reflector is
28 illustrated in Figs. 9A and 9B, which shows a photodetector active region 918 on a
29 photodetector substrate 902, along with any required electrical contacts and/or traces.
30 The photodetector may be a p-i-n photodetector on an InP substrate as described
31 above, or any other suitable photodetector provided on a suitable substrate. Substrate

902 is further provided with a silica-based, polymer, or other low-index dielectric slab 912 with an entrance face 913 and an angle-etched reflecting face 914. The angled face 914 may be fabricated at an angle sufficiently shallow for total internal reflection of light propagating with slab 912 downward toward substrate 902. Alternatively, angled reflecting face 914 may be provided with a reflective coating (metal, dielectric, or other) for reflecting light down toward the substrate. The angled face 914 is positioned so as to direct an optical beam propagating within slab 912 down onto photodetector 918. A intervening reflector layer 916 (metal, multi-layer dielectric, or other suitable reflector) may be employed between substrate 902 and slab 912 to substantially prevent leakage of light from layer 912 into substrate 902 before reaching active region 918. An optical beam entering slab 912 through entrance face 913 may propagate toward face 914 and be reflected onto photodetector 918. Fig. 10 shows the photodetector of Figs. 9A and 9B inverted and flip-chip mounted on a planar waveguide substrate 1001 and positioned for receiving light emerging from an end of planar waveguide 1020 and directing the light onto photodetector 918 (support/alignment structures omitted for clarity). Entrance face 913 and/or reflecting face 914 may be substantially planar, or may be suitably curved in one or both dimensions so as to reduce the divergence of an incident optical beam. The mounted photodetector embodiment of Fig. 10 may include a substantially transparent embedding medium between the waveguide and photodetector, or may be encapsulated in a manner similar to Fig. 15. The photodetector embodiment of Figs. 9A and 9B may alternatively be mounted on a substrate with an optical fiber in a manner similar to that shown in Figs. 14 or 16.

[0052] Another exemplary embodiment of a photodetector with an internal reflector is illustrated in Figs. 11A and 11B. A photodetector active region 1118 is provided on photodetector substrate 1102, along with any necessary electrical contacts and/or traces. The photodetector may be a p-i-n photodetector on an InP substrate as described above, or any other suitable photodetector provided on a suitable substrate. A silica-based, polymer, or other low-index waveguide 1112 (of any suitable type, including a core/clad waveguide) may be fabricated on the substrate 1102 and provided with an angled end-face 1114 positioned above the photodetector active region 1118. The angled end face 1114 may be fabricated at an angle shallow enough to result in

1 total internal reflection of optical power propagating through waveguide 1112 onto
2 photodetector active region 1118. Alternatively, reflecting face 1114 may be provided
3 with a reflective coating (metal, dielectric, or other) for efficiently reflecting light down
4 toward the substrate.

5 **[0053]** An input portion 1116 of waveguide 1112 may be adapted in a variety of ways
6 for receiving optical power for detection by the photodetector. Fig. 12 shows a
7 photodetector as in Figs. 11A and 11B (including substrate 1102, photodetector 1118,
8 and waveguide 1112) inverted and flip-chip mounted onto a planar waveguide substrate
9 1201 (support/ alignment structures omitted for clarity). Waveguide 1220 and input end
10 1116 of waveguide 1112 are adapted in this example for end-transfer of optical power
11 therebetween, requiring sufficiently precise relative positioning and alignment for
12 achieving an operationally acceptable degree of optical power transfer. The exit face of
13 waveguide 1220, the entrance face of the waveguide 1112, and/or the reflecting face
14 1114 may be flat, or one or more of them may be suitably curved in one or both
15 dimensions for reducing the divergence of an incident optical beam. Fig. 13 shows a
16 photodetector as in Figs. 11A and 11B (including substrate 1102, photodetector 1118,
17 and waveguide 1112) inverted and flip-chip mounted onto a planar waveguide substrate
18 1301 (support/alignment structures omitted for clarity). Waveguide 1320 and input end
19 1116 of waveguide 1112 are adapted in this example for transverse-transfer of optical
20 power therebetween (mode-interference-coupled or substantially adiabatically coupled),
21 requiring sufficiently precise relative positioning and alignment for achieving an
22 operationally acceptable degree of optical power transfer (typically with tolerances
23 relaxed relative to end-transfer). Reflecting face 1114 may be flat or suitably curved in
24 one or both dimensions for reducing the divergence of an incident optical beam. The
25 mounted photodetector embodiment of Fig. 12 may include a substantially transparent
26 embedding medium between fiber and photodetector, or may be encapsulated in a
27 manner similar to Fig. 15. The mounted photodetector embodiment of Fig. 13 may also
28 be encapsulated in a manner similar to Fig. 15. The photodetector embodiment of Figs.
29 11A and 11B may alternatively be mounted on a substrate with an optical fiber in a
30 manner similar to that shown in Figs. 14 or 16.

1 **[0054]** In the exemplary embodiments disclosed thus far, the entrance and reflecting
2 faces of the photodetector have been shown substantially parallel to one another in the
3 horizontal dimension (as in Figs. 2B, 3B, 5B, 7B, 9B, and 11B), and an optical beam
4 enters through the entrance face near normal incidence in the horizontal dimension (as
5 in Fig. 17). Redirection of the incident optical beam is primarily in the vertical dimension
6 (as shown in Figs. 8 and 14-16), and the point of transmission through the entrance
7 face, the point of reflection from the reflecting face, and the illuminated portion of the
8 photodetector active area are all substantially lined up with one another in the horizontal
9 dimension (as in Fig. 17, which shows optical beam 1701 transmitted through entrance
10 face 1704, reflected from reflecting face 1706, and impinging on photodetector active
11 area 1710). The nominal planes of incidence with respect to the entrance face and the
12 reflecting face are the same substantially vertical plane in the arrangement of Fig. 17.
13 In some instances it may be desirable for the optical beam to be redirected in both
14 horizontal and vertical dimensions upon internal reflection (as in Figs. 18 and 19). In
15 these arrangements the respective planes of incidence relative to the entrance face and
16 reflecting face are not parallel, and the plane of incidence relative to the reflecting face
17 is not vertical. Such multi-dimensional beam redirection typically results in a larger
18 angle of incidence as the optical beam impinges on the photodetector active area, in
19 turn resulting in an increased effective interaction length through the thickness of the
20 active area. Detection efficiency may therefore be increased by increasing the
21 interaction length, and achieving this through a larger angle of incidence may enable
22 use of thinner (and therefore more readily and/or inexpensively fabricated) material
23 layers to form the photodetector active area. In addition, beam redirection in both
24 horizontal and vertical dimensions may allow positioning of the photodetector on a
25 waveguide substrate at varying orientations relative to waveguide(s) on the substrate
26 (i.e., some beam steering occurs within the photodetector substrate), enabling more
27 compact assembly of optical devices using less waveguide substrate area.

28 **[0055]** In the exemplary embodiment of Fig. 18, the entrance face 1804 and reflecting
29 face 1806 are substantially parallel, with incident optical beam 1801 off-normal
30 (horizontally) upon transmission through entrance face 1804. Refraction results in
31 horizontal redirection of the optical beam and off-normal incidence (horizontally) on

1 reflecting face 1806. Photodetector active area 1810 is positioned so as to receive at
2 least a portion of the optical beam reflected from face 1806. The point of transmission
3 through face 1804, the point of reflection from face 1806, and the portion of active area
4 1810 illuminated by the reflected optical beam do not lie along a line when viewed from
5 above, and the incidence angle on the photodetector active area is larger than for
6 horizontally aligned embodiments. In the exemplary embodiment of Fig. 19, the
7 entrance face 1904 and reflecting face 1906 are not parallel, and the incident optical
8 beam 1901 is substantially normal (horizontally) upon transmission through entrance
9 face 1904. Non-parallel arrangement of the faces 1904 and 1906 results in off-normal
10 incidence (horizontally) on reflecting face 1906. Photodetector active area 1910 is
11 positioned so as to receive at least a portion of the optical beam reflected from face
12 1906. The point of transmission through face 1904, the point of reflection from face
13 1906, and the portion of active area 1910 illuminated by the reflected optical beam do
14 not lie along a common line when viewed from above, and the incidence angle on the
15 photodetector active area is larger than for horizontally aligned embodiments. Additional
16 embodiments may be implemented with both off-normal incidence at the entrances face
17 and non-parallel arrangement of the entrance and reflecting faces.

18 **[0056]** For purposes of the foregoing written description and/or the appended claims,
19 the term “optical waveguide” (or equivalently, “waveguide” or “transmission optical
20 element”) as employed herein shall denote a structure adapted for supporting one or
21 more optical modes. Such waveguides shall typically provide confinement of a
22 supported optical mode in two transverse dimensions while allowing propagation along
23 a longitudinal dimension. The transverse and longitudinal dimensions/directions shall
24 be defined locally for a curved waveguide; the absolute orientations of the transverse
25 and longitudinal dimensions may therefore vary along the length of a curvilinear
26 waveguide, for example. Examples of optical waveguides may include, without being
27 limited to, various types of optical fiber and various types of planar waveguides. The
28 term “planar optical waveguide” (or equivalently, “planar waveguide”) as employed
29 herein shall denote any optical waveguide that is formed on a substantially planar
30 substrate. The longitudinal dimension (i.e., the propagation dimension) shall be
31 considered substantially parallel to the substrate. A transverse dimension substantially

1 parallel to the substrate may be referred to as a lateral or horizontal dimension, while a
2 transverse dimension substantially perpendicular to the substrate may be referred to as
3 a vertical dimension. Examples of such waveguides include ridge waveguides, buried
4 waveguides, semiconductor waveguides, other high-index waveguides ("high-index"
5 being above about 2.5), silica-based waveguides, polymer waveguides, other low-index
6 waveguides ("low-index" being below about 2.5), core/clad type waveguides, multi-layer
7 reflector (MLR) waveguides, metal-clad waveguides, air-guided waveguides, vacuum-
8 guided waveguides, photonic crystal-based or photonic bandgap-based waveguides,
9 waveguides incorporating electro-optic (EO) and/or electro-absorptive (EA) materials,
10 waveguides incorporating non-linear-optical (NLO) materials, and myriad other
11 examples not explicitly set forth herein which may nevertheless fall within the scope of
12 the present disclosure and/or appended claims. Many suitable substrate materials may
13 be employed, including semiconductor, crystalline, silica or silica-based, other glasses,
14 ceramic, metal, and myriad other examples not explicitly set forth herein which may
15 nevertheless fall within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended claims.

16 **[0057]** One exemplary type of planar optical waveguide that may be suitable for use
17 with optical components disclosed herein is a so-called PLC waveguide (Planar
18 Lightwave Circuit). Such waveguides typically comprise silica or silica-based
19 waveguides (often ridge or buried waveguides; other waveguide configuration may also
20 be employed) supported on a substantially planar silicon substrate (often with an
21 interposed silica or silica-based optical buffer layer). Sets of one or more such
22 waveguides may be referred to as planar waveguide circuits, optical integrated circuits,
23 or opto-electronic integrated circuits. A PLC substrate with one or more PLC
24 waveguides may be readily adapted for mounting one or more optical sources, lasers,
25 modulators, and/or other optical devices adapted for end-transfer of optical power with a
26 suitably adapted PLC waveguide. A PLC substrate with one or more PLC waveguides
27 may be readily adapted (according to the teachings of U.S. Patent Application Pub. No.
28 2003/0081902 and/or U.S. App. No. 60/466,799, for example) for mounting one or more
29 optical sources, lasers, modulators, photodetectors, and/or other optical devices
30 adapted for transverse-transfer of optical power with a suitably adapted PLC waveguide

1 (mode-interference-coupled, or substantially adiabatic, transverse-transfer; also referred
2 to as transverse-coupling).

3 **[0058]** For purposes of the foregoing written description and/or appended claims,
4 “spatially-selective material processing techniques” shall encompass epitaxy, layer
5 growth, lithography, photolithography, evaporative deposition, sputtering, vapor
6 deposition, chemical vapor deposition, beam deposition, beam-assisted deposition, ion
7 beam deposition, ion-beam-assisted deposition, plasma-assisted deposition, wet
8 etching, dry etching, ion etching (including reactive ion etching), ion milling, laser
9 machining, spin deposition, spray-on deposition, electrochemical plating or deposition,
10 electroless plating, photo-resists, UV curing and/or densification, micro-machining using
11 precision saws and/or other mechanical cutting/shaping tools, selective metallization
12 and/or solder deposition, chemical-mechanical polishing for planarizing, any other
13 suitable spatially-selective material processing techniques, combinations thereof, and/or
14 functional equivalents thereof. In particular, it should be noted that any step involving
15 “spatially-selectively providing” a layer or structure may involve either or both of:
16 spatially-selective deposition and/or growth, or substantially uniform deposition and/or
17 growth (over a given area) followed by spatially-selective removal. Any spatially-
18 selective deposition, removal, or other process may be a so-called direct-write process,
19 or may be a masked process. It should be noted that any “layer” referred to herein may
20 comprise a substantially homogeneous material layer, or may comprise an
21 inhomogeneous set of one or more material sub-layers. Spatially-selective material
22 processing techniques may be implemented on a wafer scale for simultaneous
23 fabrication/processing of multiple structures on a common substrate wafer.

24 **[0059]** It should be noted that various components, elements, structures, and/or layers
25 described herein as “secured to”, “connected to”, “mounted on”, “deposited on”, “formed
26 on”, “positioned on”, etc., a substrate may make direct contact with the substrate
27 material, or may make contact with one or more other layer(s) and/or other intermediate
28 structure(s) already present on the substrate, and may therefore be indirectly “secured
29 to”, etc, the substrate. It should also be noted that words and phrases such as
30 “substrate upper surface”, “vertical”, “horizontal”, “height”, “level”, and the like, when
31 used in describing the photodetector substrate, are not intended to denote absolute

1 directions or positions in space, but are intended rather to denote directions or positions
2 relative to the processed surface of a semiconductor substrate or wafer. The "substrate
3 upper surface" refers to the processed substrate surface (or the surface where at least a
4 majority of processing occurs, forming the faces and active area); "horizontal" refers to
5 directions substantially parallel to the processed surface; "vertical", "height", "level", and
6 so forth refer to the direction substantially perpendicular to the processed surface; and
7 so on.

8 **[0060]** The phrase "operationally acceptable" appears herein describing levels of
9 various performance parameters of photodetectors, such as collection efficiency,
10 detector responsivity, detection bandwidth, and so forth. An operationally acceptable
11 level may be determined by any relevant set or subset of applicable constraints and/or
12 requirements arising from the performance, fabrication, device yield, assembly, testing,
13 availability, cost, supply, demand, and/or other factors surrounding the manufacture,
14 deployment, and/or use of a photodetector or optical assembly into which it may be
15 incorporated. Such "operationally acceptable" levels of such parameters may therefor
16 vary depending on such constraints and/or requirements. For example, a lower
17 collection efficiency may be an acceptable trade-off for achieving higher detection
18 bandwidth in some instances, while higher collection efficiency may be required in other
19 instances in spite of decreased detection bandwidth. The "operationally acceptable"
20 collection efficiency and detection bandwidth therefore vary between the instances.
21 Many other examples of such trade-offs may be imagined. Semiconductor
22 photodetectors, fabrication methods therefor, and incorporation thereof into optical
23 devices and/or assemblies, as disclosed herein and/or equivalents thereof, may
24 therefore be implemented within tolerances of varying precision depending on such
25 "operationally acceptable" constraints and/or requirements. Phrases such as
26 "substantially transparent", "substantially adiabatic", "substantially spatial-mode-
27 matched", "substantially parallel", "substantially normal incidence", and so on as used
28 herein shall be construed in light of this notion of "operationally acceptable"
29 performance.

30 **[0061]** While particular examples have been disclosed herein employing specific
31 materials and/or material combinations and having particular dimensions and

1 configurations, it should be understood that other suitable materials and/or material
2 combinations may be employed in a range of dimensions and/or configurations while
3 remaining within the scope of inventive concepts disclosed and/or claimed herein.

4 **[0062]** It is intended that equivalents of the disclosed exemplary embodiments and
5 methods shall fall within the scope of the present disclosure and/or appended claims. It
6 is intended that the disclosed exemplary embodiments and methods, and equivalents
7 thereof, may be modified while remaining within the scope of the present disclosure
8 and/or appended claims.